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ABSTRACT

Based directly on the reports of the National Reading Panel ("Teaching Children To Read") and the National Research Council ("Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children"), this guide is designed to be an accessible and practical document that delivers research findings about effective reading instruction that may serve as guidelines for reading teachers in Title I schools. The guide amounts to a "checklist" to help teachers and principals to recognize the key characteristics of quality reading programs at a glance and to match instruction in their classrooms to the best practices described in the research. The guide does not describe any single way to teach a child to read. It is divided into seven parts: Understanding Reading Instruction; Important Reading Skills (Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Comprehension, and Vocabulary); Reading Readiness; Beginning Readers; Intermediate Readers; Children with Special Needs; and Grade-by-Grade Accomplishments. The first six sections are not broken down by grade level: in the early grades, all children learn to read at different speeds and how to deal with different challenges. The "accomplishments" listed in the last section are based on grade levels to give teachers and parents a sense of what they can reasonably expect children to do as they become more skillful readers. (RS)

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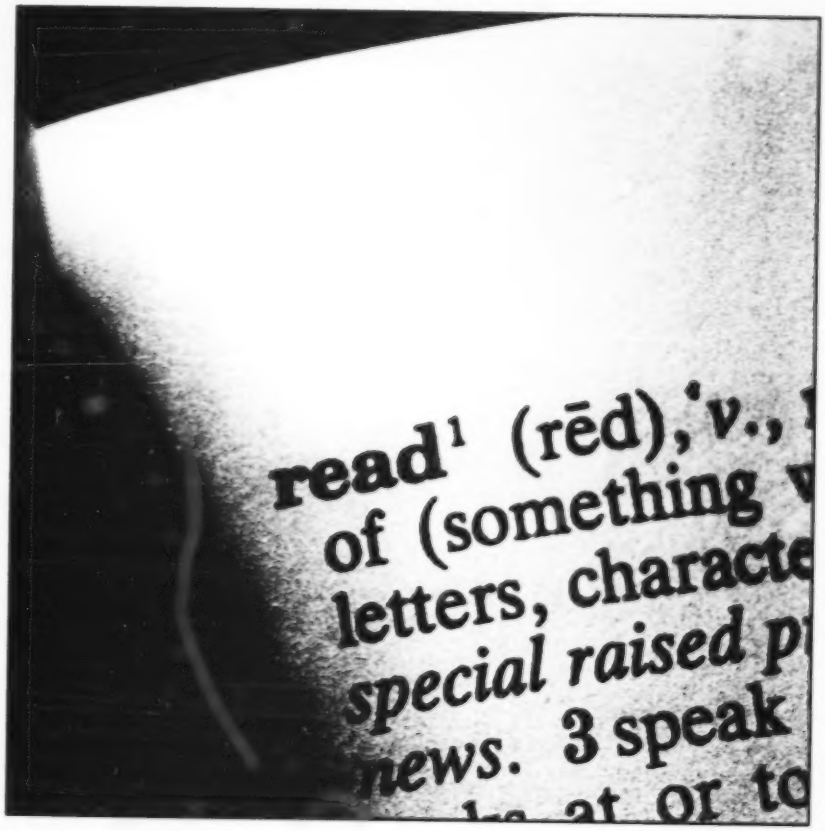
A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR EDUCATORS

ED 448 435

READING: Know What Works



NATIONAL READING PANEL UPDATE

January 2001
U. S. Department of Education
National Institute for Literacy

CS 014 235

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Dear Title I Educator:

Reading is the foundation of learning. When children first begin to read and really understand the magic of reading, their excitement and energy is contagious. It is no overstatement to say that reading unlocks the world to children.

Teachers hold the vital keys to unlocking the mysteries of the written word for their students. Their dedication and work can make all the difference in a child's academic future. Principals create the school environment in which that dedication can take root and that work can flourish.

We have come to a time – finally – when the questions about how best to teach children to read have been answered. Two recent reports have put an end to the "reading wars" that have been waged by adults for much of the 20th century, without yielding much benefit for children. The National Reading Panel's report, *Teaching Children to Read*, and the National Research Council's report, *Preventing Reading Difficulties In Young Children*, both brought together experts to determine what we know from the research on reading. These experts stated categorically that effective reading instruction is marked by a balance between decoding letters and sounds and deriving meaning from context.

The U.S. Department of Education and the National Institute for Literacy have produced this guide to inform educators about effective reading instruction. The Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement provided support in writing it. This guide is based directly on the reports of the National Reading Panel and the National Research Council. Our hope is that the description of high-quality, research-based reading instruction will allow educators to model their own practice after the reports' findings.

We designed this guide to be an accessible and practical document that delivers research findings about effective reading instruction; we expect that these findings will be used as guidelines for reading teachers in Title I schools. The guide amounts to a "checklist" to help teachers and principals to recognize the key characteristics of quality reading programs at a glance and to match instruction in their classrooms to the best practices described in the research.

The guide also includes specific reading "accomplishments" found in the National Research Council's report that describe what sorts of reading children should be able to do grade-by-grade. To be most effective, educators need

to use the guide with other resource materials and to pursue professional development activities that strengthen the skills and knowledge reflected in these pages.

We hope that you find this publication useful in teaching our nation's children how to read. Your work is invaluable to us and to our nation's future. We thank you for your commitment to some of our nation's most disadvantaged children.

Sincerely,

Mary Jean LeTendre

Andrew Hartman

Mary Jean LeTendre
Director
Compensatory Education Programs

Andrew Hartman, Ph.D
Director
National Institute for Literacy

Research Behind This Guide

This guide is based on two important reports released since 1998 exploring research on reading. The first is *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*, the report of the Committee on the Prevention of Reading Difficulties in Young Children published in 1998. This committee of literacy and child development experts was organized by the National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences at the request of the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The National Academy of Sciences was organized more than a century ago to advise the federal government on issues of science and technology.

The second is *Teaching Children to Read: An Evidence-Based Assessment of the Scientific Research Literature on Reading and Its Implications for Reading Instruction*, the report of the National Reading Panel. In 1997, Congress asked the director of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, in consultation with the Secretary of Education, to convene a panel to assess research-based knowledge about teaching children to read, including the effectiveness of various approaches to instruction. The panel of leading scientists in reading research, representatives of colleges of education, reading teachers, school administrators and parents issued its report in 2000.

These reports offer some important conclusions about reading:

- Reading is the process of getting meaning from print.
- Reading requires using knowledge of the written alphabet.
- Reading assumes knowledge of how sounds are used in spoken language to achieve understanding.
- Reading instruction should include direct teaching of the sound-symbol relationships to children who do not know about them.
- Reading instruction must maintain a focus on the purpose of reading for communication and the personal value of reading.

Research Behind This Guide

Preventing Reading Difficulties noted that "there is a common menu of materials, strategies, and environments from which effective teachers make choices. This in turn means that, as a society, our most important challenge is to make sure that our teachers have access to those tools and the knowledge required to use them well." This guide, drawn from these two reports, gives you that menu from which to choose.

How To Use This Guide

This guide does not describe a single way to teach children to read. There is no single right way for all children. In fact, the wrong way to teach children to read is to insist that they all learn the same way. There is, however, a body of knowledge about effective reading instruction that educators should know and use. The Committee on Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children wrote, "Effective teachers are able to craft a special mix of instructional ingredients for every child they work with."

Knowing more about current research into how children learn to read can help you in this task. It cannot tell you exactly what to do, but it can:

- Inform you of a larger range of methods that work;
- Help you match the right method with the student's needs and learning style;
- Steer you away from methods that do not work;
- Describe under what conditions and for what types of students these methods are effective; and
- Give examples of reasonable expectations for what children should know and be able to do as they learn to read.

We hope you will find this guide to be a practical and useful resource that you can draw upon in your daily work. You may find it helpful to have this guide flipped open on your desk as you work with students, as you create lesson plans or instructional units, or as you observe reading instruction in your school. The guide may provide you with important reminders or new information about how children learn to read that will help you succeed in the classroom or may provide you with ideas to shape professional development activities in your school.

The reports of the Committee on Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children and the National Reading Panel are organized differently, but their

How To Use This Guide

findings reinforce each other. This guide presents the most important information from both. It provides an overview of reading instruction, skills important to reading achievement, and information about the different stages children pass through when learning to read. It also addresses children with special needs.

We have not broken down this guide by grade levels. In the early grades, all children learn to read at different speeds and to deal with different challenges. A teacher may find that a technique from the Beginning Reader section works well with one student while another student in the same class benefits more from information in the Intermediate Reader section.

At the end of this guide, we have included lists of "accomplishments" that young readers may achieve developed by the National Research Council. These lists are based on grade levels to give educators and parents a sense of what they can reasonably expect children to do as they improve as readers.

This guide is organized in seven catagories:

- Understanding Reading Instruction
- Important Reading Skills
  - Phonemic Awareness
  - Phonics
  - Fluency
  - Comprehension
  - Vocabulary
- Reading Readiness
- Beginning Readers
- Intermediate Readers
- Children with Special Needs
- Grade-by-Grade Accomplishments

Understanding Reading Instruction

The National Research Council amassed the body of research on reading. Its report established a consensus view of how children learn to read.

Learning to read depends on:

- An understanding of how the alphabet represents sounds;
- Practice to achieve fluency with different kinds of texts;
- Enough vocabulary and background information to make texts meaningful and interesting;
- An ability to self-monitor for comprehension and to recognize misunderstandings independently; and
- The interest and motivation to read for a variety of purposes.

Reading is the process of getting meaning from print.

- A child must understand that language is made up of words, words are made up of individual sounds, and that these sounds are represented in the printed word by specific combinations of letters.
- Most children develop this awareness gradually over the preschool years as they play with sounds, learn to rhyme words, and recognize words that start with the same sound.
- Young children who have this "phonemic awareness" are very likely to encounter success in reading since it is the foundation on which reading is built. A child who lacks this awareness will not recognize that words are formed of different sounds and so will not be able to link printed letters to the sounds of words.

Understanding Reading Instruction

Reading instruction matters.

- Reading instruction should integrate grasping sound-symbol relationships with learning words in context.

- Reading instruction should include direct teaching of information about these sound-symbol relationships.

- Fluency should be promoted through a wide variety of well-written and engaging books that a student can master, and guidance from the teacher about which ones a child should be reading.

Writing is part of reading.

- Beginning readers should have the opportunity to write using their own spellings of words.

- This "invented spelling" does not conflict with teaching traditional spellings, but represents children's first attempt at linking the sounds they hear with the letters they see.

- When children write using phonetically based invented spelling, they reveal what they know about letters, sounds, words, and spelling. By looking at how a child spells a word, a teacher can see what the child hears and how well that child understands the relationships of sounds to letters.

Important Reading Skills

Phonemic Awareness

"Phonemic awareness" refers to the ability to focus on and manipulate the sounds or "phonemes" in spoken words. It is not "phonics", which refers to the relationship between letters and sounds. Phonemic awareness involves helping children think about words in terms of sounds composing them, and is known to contribute to children's ability to read and spell.

Building Phonemic Awareness

Do teachers in your school:

✔ Assess children's phonemic awareness before beginning instruction?

✔ Help children learn to manipulate phonemes in words?
- Recognizing the same sound in different words such as *bike*, *boy*, and *bat*
- Identifying a single sound in a word, usually the first or last sound
- Saying the individual phonemes in a word and asking students to blend them to form the whole word
- Segmenting words into the smallest units by stretching each sound so that all sounds can be heard.
- Recognizing what word is left when a phoneme is removed

✔ Emphasize phoneme manipulation with the letters in a word?

✔ Practice the letters of the alphabet so that children can access them quickly and automatically?

✔ Provide explicit instruction on no more than two skills at a time?

✔ Keep instructional sessions brief and well-focused?

✔ Work with children on phonemic awareness skills in small groups rather than in large groups or with one child?

Important Reading Skills

Phonics

Children must learn how letters are linked to sounds to form letter-sound correspondences and how to apply this knowledge to reading. One of the critical tasks for beginning readers is learning how to read the words of written language. The National Reading Panel report indicates that phonics instruction contributes substantially to students' development of reading comprehension. Children who are taught phonics systematically benefit significantly more than those who do not receive phonics instruction. They are able to decode regularly spelled words and remember how to read irregularly spelled words.

The National Reading Panel identified several approaches to phonics instruction: *analogy phonics*, which teaches new words by making analogies to familiar ones; *analytic phonics*, which teaches analysis of letter-sound relationships in learned words to avoid isolating sounds in pronunciation; *embedded phonics*, which teaches phonics skills by embedding them in text; *phonics through spelling*, which teaches students to segment words into sounds and select letters for those sounds; and *synthetic phonics*, which teaches conversion of letters into sounds and the blending of those sounds into words.

Building Phonics Skills

Do teachers in your school:

✔ Teach phonics intentionally in carefully designed instruction for the purposes of learning to decode words?

✔ Teach children explicitly to convert letters into sounds and help them blend sounds to form recognizable words?

✔ Incorporate systematic phonics instruction with other strategies to create a complete reading program?

✔ Help them to apply their phonics skills accurately and fluently in their daily reading and writing?

✔ Assess the needs of individual students and tailor phonics instruction to meet students' specific needs.

Important Reading Skills

Fluency

Fluency is the ability to read words accurately, rapidly and efficiently. Fluency is important in its own right. It is also important because of the strong relationship between accurate, fluent reading and comprehension. Though accurate word recognition is fundamental, reading fluency represents a higher level of expertise. Word recognition instruction and practice is a prerequisite to, but not sufficient for, reading fluency. Despite its importance to overall reading proficiency, instruction to improve reading fluency is often neglected in practice.

Building Fluency

Do teachers in your school:

✔ Promote repeated reading?

✔ Guide children's oral reading and provide explicit feedback?

✔ Monitor reading speed, oral accuracy and comprehension regularly?

✔ Encourage students to read passages orally more than once giving guidance and continuous feedback?

Important Reading Skills

Comprehension

Reading comprehension is the construction of meaning of a written text. It involves an interaction between the text and the reader, and is influenced by the reader's prior knowledge and experiences. A primary and overarching finding of the National Reading Panel report is that comprehension can be improved by teaching students.

Building Comprehension:

Do teachers in your school:

✔ Help children monitor their comprehension by making them aware of their understanding of the material?

✔ Encourage children to interact with others to understand information from a text?

✔ Use visual organizers such as story maps as graphic representations to assist comprehension?

✔ Help children create mental images to understand what they are reading?

✔ Encourage children to generate their own questions while they read?

✔ Teach children how to integrate ideas and generalize from the text by summarizing the information?

✔ Examine literature by asking and answering who, what, where, when and why questions about the plot and by mapping the timeline, characters and events in stories?

✔ Use a variety of comprehension techniques?

Important Reading Skills

Vocabulary

Vocabulary is the understanding of word meaning. Prior to the time children read, they learn vocabulary from the words they hear. As children learn to read, they move to reading vocabulary, understanding the meanings of words they read in text. As students read, the words they encounter in print are mapped to their repertoire of oral vocabulary. Vocabulary instruction leads to comprehension gains and is crucial to developing skilled readers.

The National Reading Panel identified several ways of teaching vocabulary: *explicit instruction*, in which students are given definitions of words to be learned; *implicit instruction*, in which students are given opportunities to do a great deal of reading and learn words through context; *multimedia methods*, in which students are taught by using media such as hypertext or American Sign Language; *capacity methods*, in which students practice words until their use is automatic so that additional capacity is available to concentrate on meaning; and *association methods*, in which students are encouraged to use imagery or to make semantic associations between words they already know and words they are likely to encounter.

Building Vocabulary

Do teachers in your school:

✔ Provide direct instruction of vocabulary before students read a text?

✔ Provide multiple exposures to vocabulary words?

✔ Teach high-frequency vocabulary words that are likely to appear in many different texts?

✔ Engage students in tasks that enable them to use vocabulary in different ways?

✔ Teach students new words in subject matter textbooks?

✔ Practice vocabulary using computer technology?

Reading Readiness

Teachers must prepare students for reading by helping them become aware that words are made up of sounds in sequence (which is called phonemic awareness). Young children need language and literacy experiences that allow them to play in ways that build literacy skills.

Preparing for Reading and Writing

Do teachers in your school:

✔ Help children discover that spoken words can be analyzed into sounds?

✔ Practice sensitivity to sounds of language?

✔ Help students learn to identify letters and the sounds they represent?

✔ Encourage children to write letters and words, even if they are just scribbles without much resemblance to the actual printed word?

✔ Teach the link between letters and sounds?

✔ Explore the sounds of language using rhymes, poems, songs, and by categorizing different sounds?

✔ Play with words by linking words that sound the same?

✔ Teach concepts of space and direction?

✔ Involve children in activities that develop fine motor skills?

Reading Readiness

Preparing for Understanding

Do teachers in your school:

✔ Have children name objects?

✔ Hold conversations with children that introduce new vocabulary?

✔ Explain difficult words when reading aloud with students?

✔ Teach children that the same word may have different meanings and how to tell which meaning is being used?

✔ Show that reading is fun and that books contain interesting stories?

✔ Provide a range of rich experiences that build large vocabularies and foster reading skills such as field trips and special musical and theatrical presentations at school?

✔ Read aloud to children, then ask simple questions about the story to develop listening comprehension skills?

✔ Encourage children to ask their own questions about what they heard as a way of checking how much they understood?

✔ Teach the difference between concrete and abstract terms?

✔ Provide time for imaginative play where children invent their own stories?

✔ Encourage students to "pretend read," "pretend write," and handle books properly on their own?

Reading Readiness

The Classroom for Reading Readiness

In classrooms in your school, do you see:

✔ Children handling books properly, looking at pictures, and pretending to read them?

✔ Teaching of the alphabet, its connection to writing words, and the link between spelling and sounds?

✔ Stories read aloud followed by questions about the story, links to real-life experience, and opportunities for children to ask questions?

✔ Students exploring new words and their meanings?

✔ Use of rhymes and playing with sound?

✔ Time for children to scribble and engage in creative play?

✔ No flash cards, trace-the-alphabet dittos, or forced literacy-related activities as the primary means of reading instruction?

Beginning Readers

Children need to understand that print conveys meaning, that print and speech are linked, and that the printed letters code the sound of words. Even at an early age, children need formal instruction in reading that focuses on the development and mastery of comprehension skills (meaning) as well as word recognition skills (mechanics). For most students, this happens in kindergarten and 1st grade.

Building Letter-Sound Awareness

Do teachers in your school:

✔ Teach awareness of the specific sounds that make up words?
- Reading rhymes and singing sound-play songs
- Finding objects in the classroom whose names begin or end with the same sound
- Doing clapping exercises to count syllables
- Making charts about letter/sound discoveries

✔ Teach sound-to-letter links directly?

✔ Instruct students in simple rules to decode words?

✔ Practice breaking down a word into its specific sounds?

✔ Help to identify the links between sounds and spelling?

✔ Teach the way sounds are commonly spelled and how to use these spellings to identify printed words?

✔ Show students how to connect letters and spellings of words to the sounds and speech units they represent?

✔ Let students put their developing skills to use by having them read and write independently or in a group?

Beginning Readers

Building Comprehension

Do teachers in your school:

✔ Create a print-rich environment where children have access to a variety of reading and writing materials?
- "Big books"
- Predictable books in which the text follows a pattern
- Rebus books in which words the child does not yet know are replaced by a picture

✔ Ask students to read aloud to adults and to each other in pairs and groups?

✔ Teach sight recognition of frequently used words?

✔ Teach vocabulary and background knowledge?

✔ Expand students' vocabulary?
- Gradually increasing the difficulty of books they read
- Reading aloud more complex books they can't read alone
- Discussing word meanings explicitly

✔ Adjust grouping and the level of instruction to meet the needs of individual students?

✔ Measure word recognition accuracy and reading fluency as children read?

✔ Work with students on strategies for comprehension?
- Summarizing the main idea and drawing inferences
- Predicting what will happen next
- Using reading to check if ideas make sense

✔ Promote independent reading outside of school?
- Daily at-home reading assignments
- Summer reading lists
- Tips for parents and the community

Beginning Readers

Building Reading through Writing

Do teachers in your school:

✔ Establish a regular writing time?

✔ Have children dictate a paragraph, then help students read their own words back?

✔ Allow students to write using invented spelling and gradually teach the spelling-sound relationships and conventional spellings of basic words?

✔ Use this invented spelling to monitor children's understanding of the relationship of words and sounds?

✔ Recognize when a child's invented spelling does not show a consistent use of symbols for specific sounds – a sign that the child is at risk for reading problems?

✔ Expect children to spell previously studied words and spelling patterns correctly in their final drafts?

✔ Encourage students to write stories, reports, letters, and other genres?

Beginning Readers

The Classroom for Beginning Readers

In classrooms in your school, do you see:

✔ Both direct instruction in sound-symbol relationships and exposure to motivating, interesting reading materials?

✔ A focus on the relationships between letters and sounds and the process of obtaining meaning from print?

✔ Instruction that makes clear connections to children's daily experiences and needs?

✔ Rich language and literacy environments?

✔ High-quality instructional materials, including materials that students can read to themselves easily and more difficult texts that a child can learn to read with the teacher?

✔ Students familiar with basic purposes and methods of reading and writing?

✔ Frequent and intensive opportunities for students to read both aloud and to themselves?

✔ Students talking about books and stories in ways that enrich their vocabularies?

✔ Practice recognizing and producing letters?

✔ Practice emphasizing the sound structure of words?

✔ Volunteer tutors used only for practice and motivational support?
- Helping read to children
- Supervising oral readings
- Talking with students about what they read

✔ Additional instruction through supplementary reading programs for students who are slightly behind expected levels?

Intermediate Readers

In the 2nd and 3rd grades, the focus of reading instruction shifts from teaching decoding and taking meaning from words to using reading to learn content. Phonemic awareness and explicit teaching of phonics should no longer be necessary for most students (although they are still vital for those with reading difficulties). Instead, teachers need to show students how to analyze, critique, abstract, and reflect on text.

Expanding Reading Skills

Do teachers in your school:

✔ Encourage students to recognize unfamiliar words?
- Sounding out according to letter/sound relationships
- Sounding out according to common spelling conventions

✔ Check that students recognize words through letter-sound relationships and not simply through context and pictures?

✔ Have students read aloud to improve their sight recognition of words?

✔ Build fluency by asking student to read a complex text over and over again?

✔ Link spelling with the sound of words as needed?

✔ Provide spelling instruction that teaches spelling patterns and word analysis strategies?

✔ Teach syntax and structure of written language?

Intermediate Readers

Expanding Comprehension Skills

Do teachers in your school:

✔ Develop students' comprehension and word recognition skills?

- Expose students to a variety of materials that challenge them to think about the text
- Encourage children to read more in school and out

✔ Teach strategies students can use to check their own reading?

- Self-questioning
- Summarizing the main idea
- Predicting events and outcomes of activities in the story
- Drawing inferences
- Determining the author's intent
- Analyzing the purpose of word choice
- Monitoring for coherence and misunderstanding

✔ Define new vocabulary words as they come up, giving both information about each word's definition and examples of how the word is used?

✔ Instruct students in the different writing conventions used to for different purposes, for example humor or irony?

✔ Assess student reading fluency and word recognition accuracy frequently and provide immediate additional instruction if a child has difficulties?

✔ Assess student's knowledge and use of strategies for reading and understanding?

✔ Monitor student comprehension and correct misunderstandings?

Intermediate Readers

Expanding Reading Skills Through Writing

Do teachers in your school:

✔ Use writing as a means of word study to improve reading?

✔ Require students to write with more complex sentences and new vocabulary words?

✔ Teach spellings and meaning of prefixes, suffixes, and word roots?

✔ Move students away from invented spelling to the conventions of print?

- Spelling
- Punctuation
- Grammar

✔ Require students to spell previously studied words and spelling patterns correctly?

Intermediate Readers

The Classroom For Intermediate Readers

In classrooms in your school, do you see:

✔ Assessment of students' reading ability (both fluency and word recognition) and strategies to help struggling students catch up?

✔ Modeling of reading and comprehension strategies for students?

✔ Opportunities for students to build fluency through frequent practice reading with different types of texts such as stories, reports, letters, newspapers, and magazines?

✔ Students reading in pairs and groups?

✔ Activities that require students to obtain meaning from print?

✔ Use of words and language to accomplish projects and learn about specific topics?

✔ Access to good libraries?

Children With Special Needs

The National Research Council's report recognized that children without much exposure to words and books may not learn to read as easily as children with large vocabularies and rich literacy experiences.

Children are more likely to fall behind if they:

- Live in disadvantaged neighborhoods;
- Have limited proficiency in spoken English;
- Have hearing or language impairments or cognitive deficiencies; and
- Have parents who had difficulty learning to read

Four common stumbling blocks to learning to read are:

- Difficulty understanding and putting into practice the idea that written spellings systematically represent spoken words;
- Failure to transfer the ability to understand spoken language to understanding reading;
- Failure to acquire new strategies specifically needed for reading; and
- Absence or loss of motivation to read or failure to develop an appreciation of the importance of reading and its rewards

Children who are having difficulty learning to read do not, as a rule, require completely different instruction from children who are "getting it." Instead, they benefit from individual attention and more expert individual application of the teaching methods.

Children With Special Needs

Children with limited proficiency in English

- In order for students to learn to read in English, they first must know English.

- If children do not know English but can use a different language, the school should teach them to read in that language, assuming expertise in that language exists in the district or can be found.

- Teachers should help children learn enough English so that they obtain the vocabulary needed to extend reading skills in English.

- If the school lacks personnel and materials in the native language, the instructional priority should be to develop the children's proficiency in spoken English before requiring them to read.

- While print materials may be used to develop understanding of English speech sounds, vocabulary, and syntax, the school should not try to instruct children in reading who have not achieved an adequate level of proficiency in spoken English.

- Students who speak non-standard dialects of English may have difficulty learning to read until they are first taught how "school English" differs from "home English."

Children With Special Needs

Teaching Children with Special Needs

Do teachers in your school:

✔ Identify children at risk as early as possible?

✔ Involve pediatricians, social workers, speech and language therapists, and preschool practitioners?

✔ Use videos and other materials to inform parents about the skills and knowledge children should acquire?

✔ Help parents learn what they can do to help their child read and where they can go if a child's development is lagging?

✔ Encourage parents to become involved in a family literacy program that can improve their own skills and their children's literacy opportunities in an integrated fashion?

✔ Build two-way communication between specialists and classroom teachers to coordinate instruction and avoid confusing children with two different reading methods or contradictory instruction?

Children With Special Needs

The Classroom for Children with Special Needs

In classrooms in your school, do you see:

✔ Materials in the students' native languages?

✔ An adult who speaks the children's language and who is trained in the second language acquisition process?

✔ A manageable class size and student-teacher ratio?

✔ Extra time in reading and writing?

✔ Time for re-reading of text?

✔ Structured writing activities?

✔ Trained reading instructors or specialists?

✔ Volunteer tutors for practice and motivational support only?

✔ Students prepared to discuss, learn about, and write about the ideas and information encountered in texts?

Kindergarten Accomplishments

Letters

✔ Recognizes and can name all uppercase and lowercase letters.

✔ Can write most letters and some words when they are dictated.

✔ Independently writes many uppercase and lowercase letters.

The Sound-Symbol Relationship

✔ Understands that the sequence of letters in a written word represents the sequence of sounds (phonemes) in a spoken word (alphabetic principle).

✔ Learns many, though not all, one-to-one letter-sound correspondences.

✔ Demonstrates understanding that spoken words consist of sequences of phonemes.

✔ Given spoken sets like "dan, dan, den," can identify the first two as the same and the third as different.

✔ Given spoken sets like "dak, pat, zen," can identify the first two as sharing one same sound.

✔ Given spoken segments, can merge them into a meaningful target word.

✔ Given a spoken word, can produce another word that rhymes with it.

Kindergarten Accomplishments

Vocabulary

✔ Recognizes some words by sight, including a few very common ones ("the," "I," "my," "you," "is," "are").

Knowledge of Books

✔ Knows the parts of a book and their functions.

✔ Can name some book titles and authors.

✔ Demonstrates familiarity with a number of types or genres of text (e.g., storybooks, expository texts, poems, newspapers, and everyday print such as signs, notices, and labels).

Reading Skills

✔ Begins to track print when listening to a familiar text being read or when rereading own writing.

✔ "Reads" familiar texts emergently, i.e., not necessarily verbatim from the print alone.

✔ Uses new vocabulary and grammatical constructions in own speech.

✔ Makes appropriate switches from oral to written language styles.

Kindergarten Accomplishments

Comprehension and Fluency

✔ Notices when simple sentences fail to make sense.

✔ Connects information and events in texts to life and life experiences to text.

✔ Retells, reenacts, or dramatizes stories or parts of stories.

✔ Listens attentively to books the teacher reads to class.

✔ Correctly answers questions about stories read aloud.

✔ Makes predictions based on illustrations or portions of stories.

Writing

✔ Uses phonemic awareness and letter knowledge to spell independently (invented or creative spelling).

✔ Writes (unconventionally) to express own meaning.

✔ Builds a repertoire of some conventionally spelled words.

✔ Shows awareness of distinction between "kid writing" and conventional orthography.

✔ Writes own name (first and last) and the first names of some friends or classmates.

1st Grade Accomplishments

The Letter-Sound Relationship

✔ Reads aloud with accuracy and comprehension any text that is appropriately designed for the first half of grade one.

✔ Accurately decodes orthographically regular, one-syllable words and nonsense words (e.g., "sig," "zot"), using print-sound mappings to sound out unknown words.

✔ Uses letter-sound correspondence knowledge to sound out unknown words when reading text.

✔ Can answer simple written comprehension questions based on the material read.

✔ Can count the number of syllables in a word.

✔ Can blend or segment the phonemes of most one-syllable words.

Vocabulary

✔ Recognizes common, irregularly spelled words by sight ("have," "said," "where," "two").

✔ Has a reading vocabulary of 300 to 500 sight words and easily sounded-out words.

✔ Shows evidence of expanding language repertoire, including increasing appropriate use of standard, more formal language.

1st Grade Accomplishments

Reading Skills

✔ Makes a transition from emergent to "real" reading.

✔ Monitors own reading and self-corrects when an incorrectly identified word does not fit with cues provided by the letters in the word or the context surrounding the word.

Comprehension and Fluency

✔ Reads and comprehends both fiction and nonfiction that is appropriately designed for the grade level.

✔ Notices when difficulties are encountered in understanding text.

✔ Reads and understands simple written instructions.

✔ Predicts and justifies what will happen next in stories.

✔ Discusses prior knowledge of topics in expository texts.

✔ Uses how, why, and what-if questions to discuss nonfiction texts.

✔ Describes new information gained from texts in own words.

✔ Distinguishes whether simple sentences are incomplete or fail to make sense; notices when simple texts fail to make sense.

✔ Engages in a variety of literacy activities voluntarily (e.g., choosing books and stories to read, writing a note to a friend).

1st Grade Accomplishments

Writing

✔ Creates own written texts for others to read.

✔ Composes fairly readable first drafts using appropriate parts of the writing process (some attention to planning, drafting, rereading for meaning, and some self-correction).

✔ Spells correctly three- and four-letter short vowel words.

✔ Uses invented spelling or phonics-based knowledge to spell independently, when necessary.

✔ Shows spelling consciousness or sensitivity to conventional spelling.

✔ Uses basic punctuation and capitalization.

✔ Produces a variety of types of compositions (e.g., stories, descriptions, journal entries) showing appropriate relationships between printed text, illustrations, and other graphics.

2nd Grade Accomplishments

The Letter-Sound Relationship

✔ Accurately decodes orthographically regular, multisyllable words and nonsense words (e.g., capital, Kalamazoo).

✔ Uses knowledge of print-sound mappings to sound out unknown words.

✔ Accurately reads many irregularly spelled words and such spelling patterns as diphthongs, special vowel spellings, and common word endings.

Vocabulary

✔ Shows evidence of expanding language repertory, including increasing use of more formal language registers.

✔ Correctly spells previously studied words and spelling patterns in own writing.

Comprehension and Fluency

✔ Reads and comprehends both fiction and nonfiction.

✔ Rereads sentences when meaning is not clear.

✔ Recalls facts and details of texts.

✔ Discusses similarities in characters and events across stories.

✔ Connects and compares information across nonfiction selections.

✔ Poses possible answers to how, why, and what-if questions.

2nd Grade Accomplishments

✔ Interprets information from diagrams, charts, and graphs.

✔ Takes part in creative responses to texts such as dramatizations, oral presentations, fantasy play, etc.

✔ Reads voluntarily for interest and own purposes.

✔ Reads nonfiction materials for answers to specific questions or for specific purposes.

Writing

✔ Makes reasonable judgments about what to include in written products.

✔ Shows sensitivity to using formal language patterns in place of oral language patterns at appropriate spots in own writing (e.g., de-contextualizing sentences, conventions for quoted speech, literary language forms, proper verb forms).

✔ Productively discusses ways to clarify and refine own writing and that of others.

✔ With assistance, adds use of conferencing, revision, and editing processes to clarify and refine own writing to the steps of the expected parts of writing process.

✔ Given organizational help, writes informative, well-structured reports.

✔ Attends to spelling, mechanics, and presentation for final products.

✔ Produces a variety of types of compositions (e.g., stories, reports, correspondence).

3rd Grade Accomplishments

The Letter-Sound Relationship

✔ Uses letter-sound correspondence knowledge and structural analysis to decode words.

Vocabulary

✔ Correctly spells previously studied words and spelling patterns in own writing

✔ Can point to or clearly identify specific words or wordings that are causing comprehension difficulties.

Comprehension and Fluency

✔ Reads aloud with fluency and comprehension any text (both fiction and nonfiction) that is appropriately designed for grade level.

✔ Reads longer fictional selections and chapter books independently.

✔ Summarizes major points from fiction and nonfiction texts.

✔ In interpreting fiction, discusses underlying theme or message.

✔ Asks how, why, and what-if questions in interpreting nonfiction texts.

✔ In interpreting nonfiction, distinguishes cause and effect, fact and opinion, main idea and supporting details.

✔ Uses information and reasoning to examine bases of hypotheses and opinions.

3rd Grade Accomplishments

✔ Infers word meaning from taught roots, prefixes, and suffices.

✔ Takes part in creative responses to texts such as dramatizations, oral presentations, fantasy play, etc.

Writing

✔ Begins to incorporate literacy words and language patterns in own writing (e.g., elaborates descriptions; uses figurative wording).

✔ With some guidance, uses all aspects of the writing process in producing own compositions and reports.

✔ Combines information from multiple sources in writing reports.

✔ With assistance, suggests and implements editing and revision to clarify and refine own writing.

✔ Presents and discusses own writing with other students and responds helpfully to other students' compositions.

✔ Independently reviews work for spelling, mechanics, and presentation.

✔ Produces a variety of written work (e.g., literature response, reports, "published" books, semantic maps) in a variety of formats including multimedia forms.

Additional Resources

Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children, National Research Council; Washington, D.C., 1998. Hardcover copies are available from the National Academy Press by calling (800) 624-6242. Each book costs $35.95 plus shipping and handling.

Starting Out Right: A Guide to Promoting Children's Reading Success, National Research Council; Washington, D.C., 1999. Copies are available from the National Academy Press by calling (800) 624-6242. Each book costs $14.95 plus shipping and handling.

Every Child a Reader: Applying Reading Research in the Classroom, Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement; Ann Arbor, Mich., 1998. Available for $10.00 per set. Order by calling CIERA (Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement) at (734) 647-6940, or email ciera@umich.edu.

Start Early, Finish Strong: How to Help Every Child Become a Reader, U.S. Department of Education America Reads Challenge; Washington, D.C., 1999. Available at the Department of Education's website, www.ed.gov.

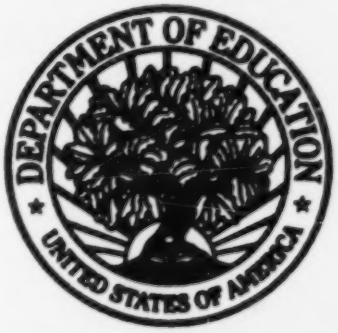
Teaching Reading is Rocket Science, American Federation of Teachers; Washington, D.C., 1999. Available at the American Federation of Teachers' website, www.aft.org.

Ideas at Work: How to Help Every Child Become a Reader, U.S. Department of Education America Reads Challenge; Washington, D.C., 1999. Single copies are available for free by calling (877) 4ED-PUBS.

The Compact for Reading, U.S. Department of Education and the *Los Angeles Times*; Washington, D.C., 1999. Available at the Department of Education's website, www.ed.gov.

Teaching Children to Read, National Reading Panel; Washington, D.C., 2000. Available on the Internet at www.nationalreadingpanel.org or at www.nichd.nih.gov.

Notes



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